Discovery of Archaeological site in Gulf of Cambay

1005. DR. KARAN SINGH: Will the Minister of OCEAN DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether an Archaeological site, dating back to 7,500 BC and older than hitherto oldest known human civilizations including those found in the Valleys of Sumer, Harappa and Egypt, was discovered by a team of Indian Marine Archaeologists in the Gulf of Cambay of Gujarat coast;

(b) if so, the details of the findings and the basis for dating it back to 7,500 BC; and

(c) what further explorations are beiflg made in and around this area?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT, MINISTER OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AND MINISTER OF OCEAN DEVELOPMENT (DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI): (a) to (c) The National Insitute of Ocean Technology (NIOT), Chennai of the Department of Ocean Development (DOD), Government of India had during the course of under water surveys in the Gulf of Cambay, Gujarat come across a stretch of formations typical of a riverine regime in the middle of the sea at 30-40 m water depth. An area of almost 9 km. stretch west of Hazira in Gujarat appeared to be lined with well laid house basement like features partially covered by sand waves and sand ripples. The Side Scan Sonar deployed for the survey picked up images which indicate several geometric objects that are normally man made.

During subsequent surveys various object/artefacts were picked up from the sea bed. Among the objects collected the carbonised wood pieces were taken up for dating using C^{14} technique in the Birbal Sahni Institute of Palaco Botany, Lucknow and in National Geophysical Research Institute, Hyderabad. The preliminary results reveal that the age of the wood samples dates back to 7500 B.C. Further detailed surveys, studies & investigations would need to be done in the area by multi-disciplinary, multi-institutional teams.